

April 26, 1996

Chuck,

A couple of thoughts to throw into the Directions Committee deliberations. This is a little off the cuff but presumably it can be refined in later discussions, if need be.

1. Meetings - It sounds as if there was a good discussion already and perhaps a move in that direction. The one clear problem that I have noticed is that meetings are often canceled, or put off to another date. The sense that "there wasn't enough on the agenda" or various other reasons just haven't cut it for me. If we're going to be serious as an organization, let's meet when we say we're going to meet. I can't imagine a time when there aren't issues to discuss or decide upon. It doesn't take long for a sense that a small group of people is making all the decisions and this then reinforces some of the problems that others have already raised. So, as others have pointed out, regular, perhaps more often, meetings with an attempt to make them more meaningful can build a more regular participation.

2. "Issue" focus - I have thought for some time that it would make sense for the Labor Coalition to focus on one area. I hesitate to use the word "issue" because I am not one to promote one issue organizing. However, I can see a great advantage and utility to pressing limited resources in one area. We have done a great job of working into the health and safety area. We're well grounded in that, have tremendous resources, are known to be expert, etc. And, despite current financial insecurities, we will maintain that as a Labor Coalition focus. It seems to me it is time to try that same level of commitment in another area. Let's throw out a few possibilities - organizing, health care reform or expertise, etc. The idea, in its simple explanation, is to be a resource to locals in one area of great expertise and support and thus, admittedly of lesser degree in other areas. And this would be for a declared length of time. That is, we would make a commitment to focus on organizing for two, five years, whatever we decide. Gain the expertise, grounding in that area then push it a little into the background in favour of something else. Among other advantages to this type of organizational

operation is to focus limited staff and resources. For example, Chuck Wynns has a dozen and one things he could do on June 10.* He looks at them and reminds himself that the Labor Coalition has directed him to make x our current priority. Of those all too numerous possibilities, this or these will most address that priority. That's what I'll work on. I'm a great one for coming to terms with our limitations and then using that to best advantage. I would be glad to get into this in more depth at some future time.

3. We spoke about organizing social times for Labor Coalition members and friends. I would like to see the staff directed to get something organized. Be it sports, discussion, or just hanging out, I think without a great effort something could happen. The benefits would be people getting to know each other better, more informal discussion and throwing around ideas, force us to take time to relax and socialize, encourage a culture of workers different than the dominate one.

Chuck, for what it's worth. I will be out of town until May 13. The notes from the April 10 meeting were very helpful. I would be grateful to keep informed about the May 1 meeting. Best of luck with it and keep up the good work. No mass firing at Red Cross, right?

Tom